



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes, 11/22/2005

**ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2005
7:30 P.M.**

Present: Jeff Thielman, Chair Susan Lovelace
Sue Sheffler, Vice Chair Paul Schlichtman
Suzanne Owayda, Secretary Martin Thrope
Sean Garballey

Superintendent Nate Levenson
CFO Rob Addelson (@9:00pm)
Asst. Supt. Kevin Hutchinson
Sp. Ed. Director Barbara Cataldo
Student Rep. EJ Harris

Call to order: 7:30

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman announced that under the rules of public participation that the School Committee may only hear and take under advisement any issue brought before them.

Doug Rosner, Bishop school parent, addressed the School Committee relative to the elimination of the Bishop school bus. Mr. Rosner explained that Bishop School parents met to review transportation options for students coming and going to school. The group focused on walking and chartering a private bus. It was concluded that crossing three major intersections posed too many safety hazards and that the cost of a private bus was prohibitive for families (could run approximately \$360.00 - \$400.00 per child).

Mr. Rosner requested that the School Committee reconsider the vote made in August to eliminate the Bishop School Bus after this year, to continue the dialogue with parents at the next community relations subcommittee meeting on November 29th and to reinstate the bus to allow safe passage for the students to get to Bishop School.

Richard Damon, Scoutmaster for Troop 302 out of Trinity Church in Arlington along with his troop was observing the School Committee meeting as part of the requirement towards their citizenship badge.

REVIEW OF GOAL THREE (PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.)

Supt. Levenson stated that this is the 1st in a number of presentations on the professional development effort. The goal is to build on what has worked well in the past, sharing best practices, increase common planning time for teachers, analyze data and refine the process.

Kevin Hutchinson, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum gave an overview of the professional development day grades 1-5. Steve Carme, Bishop School principal, reviewed the results of the 5th grade workshop and Alan Brown, Stratton School principal, reviewed the results of the 1st grade workshop.

Kathy Bodie, Director of Math K-12 explained the K-5 Math Teacher Training program and explained that the purpose is to improve training teachers in mathematics teaching.

Ms. Bodie explained that 36% of K-5 teachers are either new to the district in the past two years or are new to the grade level; teaching of elementary mathematics continues to be a national concern and the teachers, especially new teachers comment on the challenge of teaching the TERC program. The plan is to initiate a professional development model for training all teachers in the district who have joined a grade level within the last two years.

Helen McGah, mentor for 5th grade math teachers demonstrated to the committee a lesson that the 5th grade math teachers experienced.

Supt. Levenson stated that when speaking of professional development, that it is a long-term commitment and a real opportunity for some real debate and discussion, and pointed out that working together does not mean agreeing.

DOE ASSESSMENT OF DISTRICT PROGRESS ON THE ELL/SPED CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

Supt. Levenson informed the Committee that he had a meeting with the Department of Education last week to review the ELL/SPED Corrective Action Plan. Nate stated that the DOE approved 95% of the proposed responses with the remaining 5% needing modifications. Mr. Levenson explained that when the plan was first submitted the district had 3 years in order to come into compliance; new requirements has changed that date require compliance at the end of one year. Special Education Director Barbara Cataldo reported that her department is examining everything to ensure deadlines are being met on time. The first report is due to the DOE on December 16th. Ms. Cataldo has been visiting schools and preparing staff on what needs to be done month by month in order to keep to the timeline. Nate did note language change in the DOE requirement from done to substantial progress relative to the new deadline, may work in our favor.

REVIEW OF GOAL FIVE (BUDGETING)

Supt. Levenson presented the 1st step in creating a new budget and explained that the goals are:

1. To provide a clear, simple to understand document.
2. To provide detailed back up, creating transparency in spending decisions.
3. To incorporate grants and other revenue to provide a full picture of spending.
4. To provide useful summaries which will help guide resource allocation decisions.
5. To allow for bottoms up budgeting.

The Superintendent reviewed a draft set of line items with the level of back up detail for each line item, a sample budget and a sample program summary. Nate stated this is a 1st reading, (principals or department heads have not yet viewed it) and requested that the school committee review the document and provide him with feedback. Nate will set another date to allow the committee to fine tune the document and to discuss it further.

BREAK

Consent Agenda All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be

routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

- 2nd reading of ADDA(removed), ADDA-R, ADDA-E-1, ADDA-E-2 – New CORI requirements
- 2nd reading of amendment to IC - School Year and Length of Day (proposal makes hours consistent with state law).
- 2nd reading of amendment to IHAE - Physical Education (corrects reference to current practice).
- 2nd reading of Health Education (updates policy to be consistent with current practice).
- 2nd reading of IK – Academic Achievement (modify policy to be consistent with standards-based education).
- 2ndreading of IKF (removed) and IKF-E – graduation requirements. (proposal makes policy consistent with current practice).
- Approval of regular meeting minutes of: October 11 & 20, 2005

Removed Policy ADDA per Mr. Thrope's request and IKF per EJ Harris' request

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thrope it was
Voted to approve the remaining items presented on the Consent Agenda

Mr. Thrope requested that Policy ADDA be corrected by adding **Arlington Public Schools** in the first line of the policy.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was
Voted to approve the amendment to policy ADDA. Unanimous vote 7-0

Student Rep EJ Harris requested clarification in the changes on the early graduation requirement; there being no changes to that item Mr. Thrope made the motion to accept the policy changes as presented.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was
Voted to approve policy IKF &IKF-E as presented. Unanimous vote 7-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Supt. Levenson brought to the Committee's attention the memo from AHS principal Charlie Skidmore addressing past questions and follow ups from the school committee.

Capital Budget Approval

CFO Rob Addelson presented and reviewed the items proposed for the FY2007-20011 Capital Plan. Mr. Addelson explained that the projects are ranked in priority as requested from the Capital committee.

Mr. Addelson requested the School Committees' approval and authorization to submit the document to the Capital Committee.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was
Voted to approve and authorize the 2007-2011 Capital Plan to the Capital Committee as submitted by CFO Rob Addelson.
Unanimous vote 7-0.

Peirce School Heating Update

Supt. presented two issues that are very different and he believes that they are unrelated. The 1st problem is with the computer control system that does not appear to be controlling the temperature, some parts of the building are hot and others cold. Service

technicians are actively working on this and have improved the problem but have not fixed it to date. Next step meeting with high level staff a the service company, and to monitor the temperature in all of the rooms inside and out on a daily basis to track what is and is not working.

The 2nd problem is a lot of reflected heating coming off of a first floor roof that is making some classes much warmer than others; we are bringing in the HVAC designer and the architect to review the situation.

Nate will present a plan of action to parents after Thanksgiving break.

• **Job Description- International Travel Facilitator** - Mr. Levenson presented the revised/ reformatted as requested. Mr. Thrope requested to recast the original vote
On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Garballey it was
Voted to recast and accept the International Travel Facilitator for Arlington High School as presented by Supt. Levenson.
Unanimous vote 7-0.

• **Ottoson AYP plan.** Supt. Levenson explained that the Ottoson Adequate Progress plan must be approved by the School Committee and he requested that they do so.

Mr. Schlichtman noted that he would support the plan as a short term solution but does not think that this is the direction to take for a long-term plan.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was:
Voted to accept the Ottoson Adequate Progress plan as presented. Unanimous vote 7-0.

Mr. Thielman complimented Julia McLaughlin and the payroll department for addressing and clarifying comp. time issues and snow day policy.

The Chair also complimented the report by Jill McCarthy on ELL; noting that it was excellent, honest and straight forward on the challenges that we face. Mr. Levenson did note that the program will be up and running at the start on the New Year on January 3rd.

• **SY '07 Enrollment Projections** (Policy FA) submitted per policy. Nate stated that at this point the projected enrollment shows a small increase; as we move forward we will have a better sense of the K numbers. These projections will be the basis of our budget planning.

The Committee discussed briefly the issue of redistricting and school capacity. Ms. Sheffler explained that the Redistricting Advisory examined the redistricting issue and decided that rather than use a lot of resources for a short-term solution; to wait for a concrete date on the Stratton and Thompson rebuild before we go for a redistrict.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES (Next meetings & reports)

• **Policies & Procedures** (12/01/05, @ 5:30 p.m.) Mr. Thrope reported that section J will be reviewed as well as the goal setting policy, and religious holiday policy

• **Budget** (next meeting 12.09.05, 8:30 a.m.) the agenda will be discussion on transportation, medical support for staff and discussion of the new school committee budget format.

• **Community Relations Subcommittee** (next meeting 11.29.05, 4:30 p.m.) Ms. Lovelace reported that agenda items for the next meeting include revisiting the video club use on cable access and the mandates sent to the committee, signage and field usage issues, and new business with additional issues.

• **Merit Pay Subcommittee** (report of 11.21.05 meeting) Mr. Thielman reported on the subcommittee meeting of 11/21 and stated that the committee is at the beginning stage of the process; the next meeting will take place on December 6th at 4:30 pm.

• **Joint BOS-SC Meeting** (11.28.05 at 6:00 p.m.) Supt. Levenson and CFO Rob Addelson will make a presentation on the work that has been done by the school department on the budget and then the Town Manager will present a similar report on the progress made on the Town Side.

A school committee workshop on interest based bargaining with the AEA will be on December 16th in the school committee room 11:00 am to 4:00 pm; any available members are urged to attend.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Ms. Owayda noted that the APS would host a discussion for parents on "Getting Ready for Kindergarten"; the workshop will take place on Wednesday, December 7th at the Brackett School from 7:00 – 8:45 pm.

On December 2nd METCO will host its 21st Conference of the Directors Association meeting.

Sean Garballey noted that December 2nd is Special Education Day and that he will speak at the conference held in Marlboro that day.

NEW BUSINESS

• Sean Garballey attended the retirement party and represented the Arlington School Committee for retired APS teacher Sue Nocella.

“ Mr. Schlichtman stated that he had received correspondence from the Peirce Community relative to the Downing Square study on traffic patterns. Paul noted that we do have a number of students who travel through that intersection to attend Peirce School; and would like to invite the TAC and someone from the Peirce Community to attend the next regular school committee meeting to discuss concerns.

Mr. Levenson would like to meet and discuss the issues and concerns with the involved parties before bringing it before the full committee.

“ Sean Garballey- requested that AHS Principal, Charles Skidmore attend the next school committee to address the substance abuse that took place at the junior/senior semi formal on November 18th. Mr. Garballey would like to assure the public that the school department views the incident very seriously. Mr. Skidmore will give an update on what happened and what the next steps are.

Supt. Levenson spoke with Mr. Skidmore regarding the incident and they are looking into what happened, what could have been done differently and what will be done differently at future dances.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was
Voted to adjourn @ 10:45 pm. Unanimous vote 7-0

Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary